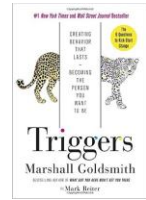


Triggers:

Creating Behavior Change that Lasts - Becoming the Person You Want to Be

Book's Argument: A **trigger** is any stimulus that reshapes our thoughts and actions. Our environment is the most potent triggering mechanism in our lives – and not always for our benefit. Regret is the emotion we experience when we assess our present circumstances and reconsider how we got here. We replay what we actually did against what we should have done – and find ourselves wanting in some way. The author suggests embracing regret (although not too tightly or for too long). When we make bad choices and fail ourselves or hurt the people we love, we should feel pain. That pain can be motivating and in the best sense, triggering – a reminder that maybe we messed up but we can do better.



Key Takeaways:

Our inner beliefs trigger failure before it happens and we chronically underestimate the power of triggers in our environment to lead us astray. We are notoriously inaccurate in assessing ourselves. If we're successful, we tend to credit ourselves for our victories and blame our situation or other people for our losses. This belief triggers an impaired sense of objectivity. It convinces us that while other people consistently overrate themselves, our own self-assessment is fair and accurate. Honestly assessing the interplay in our lives between these two forces – the environment and ourselves – is how we become the person we want to be. The first objective is awareness – being awake to what's going on around us. The second is engagement – actively participating in our environment – and that the people who matter to us recognize our engagement.

Trigger → (impulse – awareness – choice) → Behavior

Feedback – both the act of giving it and taking it – is our first step in becoming smarter and more mindful about the connection between our environment and our behavior. The feedback loop comprises four stages: evidence, relevance, consequence, and action.

Six questions to ask ourselves each day in our pursuit of any behavioral change include:

- Did I do my best to set clear *goals* today?
- Did I do my best to make *progress* toward my goals today?
- Did I do my best to find *meaning* today?
- Did I do my best to be *happy* today?
- Did I do my best to build positive *relationships* today?
- Did I do my best to be fully *engaged* today?

There are three benefits that stem from these daily questions. If we do it, we get better and we get better faster. The more we correctly repeat an action the more adept we become at executing it and, eventually, we become our own self-policing coach.

As we need help when we're least likely to get it, there should be a simple structure that (a) anticipates that our environment will take a shot at us and (b) triggers a smart, productive response rather than foolish behavior. This process requires us to score our effort and reminds us to be self-vigilant. The simpler the structure, the more likely we'll stick with it. We need commitment, awareness, scoring, and repetition.

Best Quotes: "Fate is the hand of cards we've been dealt. Choice is how we play the hand." "To avoid undesirable behavior, avoid the environments where it is most likely to occur." "People don't get better without follow-up." – Marshall Goldsmith "Half the leaders I have met don't need to learn what to do. They need to learn what to stop." "Every decision in the world is made by the person who has the power to make the decision. Make peace with that." – Peter Drucker

Why it's important: Behavioral change helps us achieve positive, lasting change in the behavior that we choose as judged by key stakeholders that we choose. There exist two immutable truths: 1) meaningful behavioral change is very hard to do and 2) no one can make us change unless we truly want to change. Goldsmith emphasizes changing our behavior when we're among people we respect and love. They are our target audience. What makes positive, lasting behavioral change so challenging – and causes most of us to give up early in the game – is that we have to do it in our imperfect world, full of triggers that may pull and push us off course. If we change our behavior, we change the people around us. Achieving meaningful and lasting change may be simple but simple is far from easy.

Marshall Goldsmith & Mark Reiter (2015)